

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

DECEMBER 29, 2019 / HOLY FAMILY

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS: How Christianity Saved Civilization... Part V

In the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* starring James Stewart, George Bailey discovers what life would be like if he had never been born. Have you ever wondered what the world would be like without the birth of Christ? What if there was no Christianity? Mike Aquilina and James Papandrea's book: ***How Christianity Saved Civilization... and Must Do So Again*** can help us not only imagine what the world would be like without Christianity but can also help us grow in a deeper appreciation of how much the Catholic Church has changed the world for the better. Quotes from their book will be in bold and my commentary will be in normal font.

In times of prosperity, people looked at the fines and decided that they could afford them there were lifestyle expenses. Various emperors after Augustus tried to encourage childbearing through legislation but their efforts uniformly failed. Rome could not require spouses to trust each other. Rome cannot require a person to defer gratification of any desire for the sake of another person. Rome cannot impose a requirement for citizens to transcend their petty desires for the sake of the common good.

Kimberly Hahn, the wife of Scott Hahn, in her book: *Life Giving Love* writes the following:

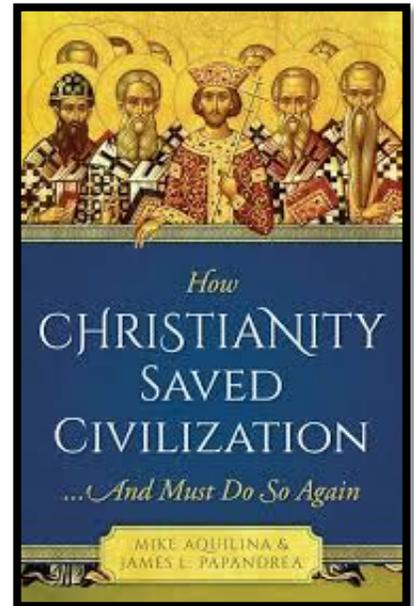
In 1930, the Anglican's Lambeth Conference in England became the first official Christian body to approve the use of contraception in the most severe cases. In response, a Jesuit, Fr. David Lord, wrote the following analysis.

1. Birth control destroys the difference between prostitutes and respectable women by eliminating the ideal of motherhood and substituting the ideal of personal pleasure and self-gratification.
2. Birth control leads to infidelity by destroying self-restraint and self-discipline. For unmarried folk it banishes fear of consequences.
3. Birth control prevents noble faculty by refusal to co-operate with God in creation of children and substitutes for it, pleasure.
4. Birth control affects the future. Substituting self-gratification for children, (those using it) strike at the very source of human life.

The Imperial government in Rome, for all his marvelous achievements – which included clean water, the rule of law, and the suppression of piracy – cannot compile its citizens to trust in the future. Lacking that hope Romans didn't want children, and so they didn't have them – or at least they didn't raise them. Instead, they for their effort into the pursuit of pleasure.

Children should never be rejected because of how they might impact a person's wealth or social status.

Clement of Alexandria I observed that the same people who killed their newborns nevertheless lavished attention



and money on their pets. "They expose children that are born at home, and take up the hatchlings of birds, and refer irrational to rational creatures." The wealthy who put their children out with the trash sometimes buried their dogs and cats and elaborate tombs.

I love my dog Hope, but I know there is a big difference between her and one of my nieces or nephews. We also know that there are some people who act like the ancient Romans with their pets and this should scare us.

The fundamental family relationship in Rome was the relationship of owner to property. Yet Paul tells husbands to be ready to die for their wives, steeped in Roman family values, this little better than nonsense. You might love your wife, but die for her? You my love your chariot, but it would make no sense to die for it. If you die, your chariot would be of no use to you.

Give new meaning to St. Paul's writings.

Here is the difference between a pagan wedding in a Christian one. The pagan wedding the celebration of the pleasure the husband is about to get out of his bride (who, as we said earlier, it expected not to like it). The Christian wedding is a sacrament, a union of two souls, and earthly image that mirrors the love of Christ for his Church and the love of the three persons of the Trinity. Neither spouse is acquiring property; both are coming together to form an indissoluble union.

Marriage in the Catholic Church is the creation of a new family bond of equal partners so that each partner may help the other (and any children) to reach heaven. All the Church's teaching on sex and marriage come down to do things that will honor and respect your spouse and avoid things that will make you treat your spouse as an object.

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

December 29 2019 // Holy Family // Lectionary: 17 // Gospel MT 2:13-15, 19-23

When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."

Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, *Out of Egypt I called my son*. When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, *He shall be called a Nazorean*.

Spiritual Reflection: "Let those who think that the Church pays too much attention to Mary give heed to the fact that Our Blessed Lord Himself gave ten times as much of His life to her as He gave to His Apostles." - Fulton J. Sheen. Don't underestimate the power of family in shaping each other's character.

Spiritual Questions:

1. How do I understand God's life acting through me?
2. Do I strive to love rather than intimidate people?
3. Do I help unite people at Church, at work, or at home?
4. When do I experience the Lord's kindness?
5. What do I think about when I hear the word "obedience" at church?

Thought of the Day

Sunday: For every believer, and especially for Christian families, the humble dwelling place in Nazareth is an authentic school of the Gospel. Here we admire, put into practice, the divine plan to make the family an intimate community of life and love; here we learn that every Christian family is called to be a small "domestic church" that must shine with the Gospel virtues. Recollection and prayer, mutual understanding and respect, personal discipline and



community asceticism and a spirit of sacrifice, work and solidarity are typical features that make the family of Nazareth a model for every home. – Angelus, December 30, 2001 - JPPII

Monday: Waiting For God to answer prayers can also be a time of great grace.

Tuesday: Mary is not God, but she is the Mother of God. She is only a creature, but she is God's greatest creation. Just as artists long to paint one masterpiece among their many works, so Jesus made His mother to be His greatest masterpiece. To continue the metaphor: No artist A God who wishes to be revealed instead of deist God.

Wednesday: Mary is not God, but she is the Mother of God. She is only a creature, but she is God's greatest creation. Just as artists long to paint one masterpiece among their many works, so Jesus made His mother to be His greatest masterpiece. To continue the metaphor: No artist is offended when we praise his greatest work. In fact, he might be offended if we don't. To affirm the truth about Mary does not detract from Jesus, although not to affirm it could. – Scott Hahn

Thursday: Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless. - Mother Teresa

Friday: We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. - Albert Einstein

Saturday: Apprenticeship

PRO-LIFE



December 2019

Heavenly Father, help us to stay awake and be ready to see the opportunities and chances to bring Your Son's love to those around us especially those who have wandered away from the your Church and no longer believe. May we be like John the Baptist and call people back to you in an effective way. We ask this through Christ our Lord . Amen.

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Heavenly Father, please lift up the whole church, summoned again to wake from sleep, to throw off the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light that we may respond joyously to the call to be messengers of light and as we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son, may we also proclaim the dignity of all life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen



St. Monica Society

Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

Catholic Prayers



BLESSING OF A HOME

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.
V. The Lord be with you.

R. Who has made heaven and earth.
R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray.

We humbly beg of you, God the Father almighty, to bless and sanctify this home, those who live in it and everything in it. Be so kind as to fill it with all good things. Grant them, Lord, abundance of blessings from heaven and the substance of life from the richness of the earth. Direct the longings of their prayer to the fruits of Your mercy. Be so kind, then, as to bless and sanctify this home at our coming in, just as You blessed the home of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. May Your angels of light live within the walls of this house, and guard it and all who live in it, through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.



Humor

1. Mary arrived at the pearly gates and immediately said, "I ASSUME this is Heaven?"
2. A store in Beijing was advertising itself as the store "Where the Pope buys his plates." The Pope sent a priest to the store to get them to change their slogan, but the store's owners did not listen. Next, the pope sent a bishop to the store, but the bishop was also unable to convince the store's owners to cease their advertising campaign. The pope then sent a cardinal to Beijing. When the cardinal returned unsuccessful, the Pope became enraged. He wrote a furious letter to the store's owners. He handed the note to the cardinal and told him to find some cattle stick the letter on one of their horns and get it to charge into the store. The day after the cardinal carried out the Pope's orders, the front page headline of L'Osservatore Romano read, "Papal Bull in a China Shop."
3. One day, Jesus walked into a bank and asked to put something in the bank. The teller asked Him what He wanted to put in the bank, and Jesus replied, "A DEPOSIT OF FAITH!"
4. What do you call the lettering on an invitation to a baby's first sacrament?.....THE BAPTISMAL FONT!
5. What do you call a deacon, a priest, and a bishop asking for food at a restaurant?.....HOLY ORDERS!